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*With the Theatrical Affections*  
*Bound in 1 8 July 1857*

The Pilgrims of Plymouth:

*537*  
*2798*

A P O E M

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE NEW-ENGLAND SOCIETY

In the City of New York,

AT THEIR

SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY,

DECEMBER 22, 1855.

BY JOHN PIERPONT.

BOSTON:

CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,

11, WASHINGTON STREET.

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## THE PILGRIMS OF PLYMOUTH.

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O'ER the rough billows of the Western Sea,  
Careers the wind, for ever fresh and free, —  
Fresh as when first “the spirit of the Lord  
Moved on the waters,” and the almighty word  
The firm foundations of their barriers laid,  
Saying, “Your proudest waves shall here be stayed ;”  
And free as at the moment of its birth,  
When it breathed softly on the virgin earth,  
And its Creator gave it leave to go  
Where'er it chose, and, where it listed, blow ;  
Spreading its living wings, at will, abroad,  
By king's decree or bishop's ban unawed ;  
Chained by no Stuart, locked up by no Laud.

With souls taught freedom by the winds that swept  
Landward, and rocked their cradles as they slept ;  
Souls that no more can brook the bigot's chain,  
Than can the surges of the mighty main ;

Souls, they are not afraid to call their own,  
 That brave at once the mitre and the throne,  
 But bow, while gathered on the ocean's brim,  
 To God in worship, and to none but him, —  
 Behold the Pilgrim-band! Their native isle,  
 Ruled by a bigot, casts them out as vile ;  
 The State forbids them, by its stern decrees,  
 To worship God when, where, and *as* they please ;  
 While they — to conscience true, in virtue strong,  
 Stiff in the right as others in the wrong —  
 Resolve, though earthly thrones and temples fall,  
 That they will worship thus, or not at all.  
 And though not now the Puritan expires  
 On Tyburn's gallows or in Smithfield's fires,  
 Yet fines, pains, penalties, there still remain, —  
 The Nonconformist's prison and his chain.  
 Fleeing, with horse and hound upon his track,  
 His very garments stripped from off his back,  
 Scoffed by fanatics, and held up to scorn  
 By king, by courtier, and the nobly born, —  
 He bids adieu, to see their face no more,  
 And lay his bones upon a foreign shore ;  
 And on the Mayflower's deck the Pilgrims stand,  
 One faith, one spirit, binding all the band,  
 That soon shall quit for aye their native land.

Hark ! the same voices that have swelled the song  
 Of praise to God, amid the assembled throng,

In solemn temples, or in humble domes  
 Around the hearthstones of their several homes,  
 Hymning, are heard upon the air to float, —  
 Man's organ-tone, and woman's silvery note,  
 Blending in one ; and, as it sinks and swells,  
 The music mingles like " those evening-bells "  
 When in the lines of Erin's bard they swing ;  
 And here we have the parting hymn they sing : —

## H Y M N.

Before us, Lord ! old Ocean spreads  
 His blue and boundless plain ;  
 But, wheresoe'er thy spirit leads,  
 We follow, o'er the main.

From persecution's bolts and bars,  
 Sustained by thee, we turn ;  
 And — guided by the holy stars  
 That nightly o'er us burn —

We go, through faith in Him who trod  
 The Galilean Sea,  
 In a drear wilderness, O God !  
 In peace to worship thee.

For us, no proud cathedral there  
 Its doors shall open throw ;  
 Yet can we lift our souls in prayer,  
 While kneeling on the snow.

We'd rather meet stern Winter's frown,  
 Wild beast, and savage man,  
 Than take the mercy of the crown.  
 Or bear the church's ban.

Rather than ask the grace of kings,  
 Or bow to their decrees,  
 We'll trust the most unstable things, —  
 The billow and the breeze.

For on the billow, in the breeze,  
 The Almighty Spirit rides ;  
 And aye controls, by his decrees,  
 The tempests and the tides.

His hosts — the winds, the lightning's glare —  
 Encamp around the just ;  
 With us they move ; their guardian care  
 Is our defence and trust.

Our sail unfurling to the wings  
 Of all the winds that blow,  
 We leave the land of priests and kings,  
 With thee, O God ! to go.

The land of priests and kings those Pilgrims leave :  
 See their frail bark the white-capped billows cleave !  
 Her westering canvas and her crowded deck,  
 With growing distance, dwindle to a speck,  
 Till, in the setting sun, she's lost to sight, —  
 Pilgrim, sail, streamer, all absorbed in light.

A thistle-seed, some autumn afternoon,  
 Careering in its gossamer balloon,  
 You see roll o'er you, on the buoyant air,  
 To fall, you'll say, perhaps, "the Lord knows where."  
 That word, my friend, though not, I'm sure, what you  
 Think very reverent, is yet strictly true.  
 Though, in the blaze of the descending sun,  
 That seed's lost sight of, the All-seeing One  
 Directs the current that buoys up the ball,  
 Knows whence it came, and sees where it will fall;  
 Knows, for he's fixed, the place for it to rest,  
 What gust would lift, what breeze would bear it best;  
 Knows every drop of water, in the flood,  
 That wets its wings, and plants it in the mud;  
 And how much sunshine, and what depth of snow,  
 Must warm its bed, and make the thistle grow.

Think ye that seed, careering through the air,  
 Is more an object of its Maker's care  
 Than is that vanishing, that vanished speck,  
 That air-borne atom, that wave-wafted deck,  
 That bears within it, o'er an unknown sea,  
 The seed of States, — of nations yet to be?  
 Tells he the thistle where to strike its root,  
 And not the Pilgrim where to plant his foot?

No flag of England, flapping in the breeze, —  
 The flag that claims the empire of the seas, —

Floats at his stern ; and, carved upon his bow,  
 No monarch rides, and bathes in brine his brow,  
 With every sea that breaks upon the deck ;  
 No armèd convoy waits upon his beck ;  
 Along his lonely track, though pirates prowl,  
 No iron sea-dogs at his port-holes growl ;  
 Not even does " star-eyed science " point his way  
 To Hudson's mouth, — the deep and broad-armed  
     bay,  
 Whose ample bosom and whose sunny smile  
 Give warmth, wealth, beauty, to Manhattan's isle, —  
 Isle where his children, yet to be, shall throng,  
 To applaud his faith in eloquence and song.  
 Yet, though he comes not " as the conqueror comes,"  
 With braying trumpets and the roll of drums ;  
 Comes not, by science guided through the dark,  
 With guarding fleets around his helpless bark, —  
 Still is there found, on bleak New-England's shore,  
 A haven for him, never known before ;  
 And there the Mayflower, folding up her wings,  
 Like a tired sea-bird, round her anchor swings.

As the descending sun with glory floods  
 The eastern waters and the western woods,  
 The Pilgrim-band, secure from storm or wreck,  
 Man, woman, child, stand out upon the deck.  
 What golden sunshine ! how much brighter skies  
 Than they have seen before, now meet their eyes !

None of the mists that wrap their native isle  
 Hang round these shores: the woods, the waters  
 smile.

Says Elder Brewster, with a reverent air,  
 "Come, let us bow in gratitude and prayer."  
 Was there e'er uttered, by the lips of man,  
 A prayer more fervent, since the world began?  
 It is not ours, with hearts and faith so faint,  
 To give the language of that Pilgrim saint.  
 Our faith his discipline has never borne:  
 Shall we thank God for that? or shall we mourn, —  
 Mourn that we, nourished on the lap of ease,  
 Have let the spirit of devotion freeze  
 Upon our lips, even when they move in prayer?  
 May God forgive us, and yet make us bear  
 More of such crosses as the Pilgrims bore,  
 That they might raise an altar on our shore,  
 If that will fan the flame that burns so dim  
 In our cold bosoms, when we worship Him!

The prayer is closed. The Pilgrims all have prayed;  
 And o'er them Evening gently throws her shade.  
 Cold from the icy shore the night-winds blow:  
 From their chill breath they all retire below,  
 Save the night-watch; but, ere they sink to sleep,  
 On the scarce-breathing bosom of the deep,  
 This evening hymn, with voices soft but clear,  
 They pour into their heavenly Guardian's ear: —

## H Y M N.

The winds, O God! thy voice obey,  
 The raging seas thy will;  
 For both are hushed, when thou dost say,  
 "Ye tempests, peace, be still!"

Thy hand our feeble bark upheld,  
 When tossed upon the wave;  
 Else had we, when the billows swelled,  
 Found in their depths a grave.

We've seen thy smile on yonder woods,  
 And in this evening sky;  
 And, 'mid these awful solitudes,  
 We're safe beneath thine eye.

Night o'er us spreads her starry wings,  
 And shall her vigil keep,  
 While, after all our wanderings,  
 In peace thy servants sleep.

All the long hours, while Darkness holds her throne,  
 The sturdy Standish walks the deck alone,  
 To guard that cradle of a Commonwealth  
 From foes, advancing, or by force or stealth;  
 While thoughts like these, though not in words  
 expressed,  
 Steal o'er his soul, and move his manly breast: —

"Beneath my feet, far richer treasures lie  
 Than floated erst in Jason's argosy;



Ay, to the waiting world a greater boon  
 Than e'er was borne by a three-decked galleon :  
 The golden fleece, the silver of Peru, —  
 What are *they*, weighed against pure souls and true ?  
 Those might spread for me here a bed of down,  
 Or glitter in an earthly monarch's crown ;  
 But these " shall be remembered when the Lord  
 Makes up his jewels : " is not that his word ?  
 And by the Saviour's hand shall each be set,  
 To shine for ever in his coronet ;  
 Nay, each bright spirit, like an orient gem,  
 Shall sparkle in his Father's diadem.  
 For here firm faith, unsullied honor, rest,  
 Woman's true heart, and beauty's spotless breast ;  
 In all, the spirit to endure and dare ;  
 All men of valor, and all men of prayer, —  
 Men full of grace, faith, charity, and hope,  
 Who want no bishop, and will have no pope ;  
 Who want, of course, no bishop's underlings ;  
 Who're their own priests, — ay, their own priests and  
     kings ;  
 Men who're resolved, whatever else they be,  
 That they in soul and body will be free ;  
 Who ne'er have learned, and ne'er will learn, to  
     cower  
 Either to royal or to priestly power ;  
 Men whom the Lord, and not the king, made great,  
 And who themselves are both a church and state.

While o'er such spirits I keep watch and ward,  
 I seem to see an angel of the Lord,  
 In radiant garments, standing at the bow,  
 With a soft glory beaming from his brow,  
 And hear him say, in solemn tones and sweet,  
 'An embryo empire sleeps beneath thy feet.'"

Standish, it *was* a spirit from on high  
 That to thy spirit spake that prophecy:  
 While watch and ward thy valiant spirit kept,  
 Beneath thy feet an embryo empire slept.

"Tis morning: a dull, cold December day,  
 From cheerless skies, comes down upon the bay;  
 Revealing, in its leaden-colored light,  
 Bare rocks and leafless forests to the sight.  
 No craggy barriers beetling o'er the strand,  
 Frowning them off, before the Pilgrims stand:  
 But sandy slopes, with granite bowlders strewn;  
 Some open fields, where Indian corn had grown;  
 Hill-sides that wait the culture of the vine,  
 Should summer ever on those hill-sides shine,  
 But wooded now with walnut, oak, and pine,  
 And a bold height, that overlooks the plain,  
 And seaward guards the harbor and the main,—  
 Compose the panorama of the ground  
 Chosen by God, and by the Pilgrims found,

Where, amid rocks and sand and ice and snow,  
 The seeds of faith and liberty shall grow, —  
 Seeds that have floated on the winds and waves,  
 From the Old World, from the dead martyrs' graves,  
 Now to be planted by an exiled few  
 On this cold, barren border of the New.

Ask me not, friends, to hold up in my rhyme,  
 To your admiring gaze, that most sublime,  
 That most affecting picture, ever painted  
 By merely human hands, however sainted, —  
 Of a high purpose, ne'er to bend the knee  
 To man or God, but in full liberty,  
 Which the stern Pilgrim Fathers of our land,  
 And Pilgrim Mothers, working hand in hand,  
 Spread on the canvas, on that wintry day,  
 When, from the Mayflower, anchored in the bay,  
 The Elder, Brewster, issuing with his flock,  
 Knelt down, and worshiped God on Plymouth Rock.

The subject, and man's power, for once regard;  
 Historian, artist, orator, and bard,  
 Each by the theme inspired, with lofty aim,  
 Spurred on by genius and the hope of fame,  
 With pen, brush, burin, all the charms of style,  
 And with full knowledge of the facts the while,  
 And with a courage that has never quailed,  
 Have tried to do that landing: all have failed.

Ask ye the *why*? One word explains the whole:  
 The greatness of the theme was in the soul, —  
 The soul of those who brought the deed about, —  
 Which, but in *action*, cannot be brought out.  
 Brace but our souls up to the pitch of theirs, —  
 Their faith in God, the fervor of their prayers,  
 The feeling, nay, the knowledge, that in prayer  
 There is a power that is no otherwhere;  
 Their trust in truth, that, in the Almighty's sight,  
*He* is almighty who is *in the right*;  
 The feeling that we're bound by God's command;  
 That none can take us out of *his* strong hand;  
 That we are *his*, whether we will or no;  
 That we can never true allegiance owe  
 To any earthly power, whate'er it is,  
 Whose statutes or commands conflict with *his*; —  
 Their fixed resolve, that, to an earthly throne,  
 They would submit but on these terms alone,  
 That it should ne'er require them to withdraw  
 Their faith and fealty from the higher law  
 Given them by God; since none of this world's  
     great, —  
 No legislator, prince, or potentate,  
 No dignitary in the church or state, —  
 Let me obey his mandates e'er so well,  
 Will e'er consent to take my place in hell,  
 Or bear the least of all my penalties  
 For breaking God's commands in keeping *his*.

String but our souls, as did the Pilgrims theirs,  
 To this high pitch, and in the world's affairs  
*We* may act such a part, that they who claim  
 A kindred with us, and who bear our name,  
 May glory in the name that they inherit,  
 And pride themselves in *their* forefathers' spirit ;  
 May say, " Those men of eighteen fifty-five  
 Had souls within them that were all alive ;"  
 Stamp on their children's memories the date  
 Of some great deed that made their fathers great ;  
 Call on their orators and bards to give  
 Our names a place with names ordained to live ;  
 Talk of those fathers ; say, " Those were the men  
 That the world stood in need of, there and then ;"  
 Say, " Though they knew no bishop and no throne,  
 They knew the *right* ; and, though they went alone,  
 They went where *went* the right, through fire and frost,  
 Made no concessions, counted not the cost  
 Of noble enterprise and great endeavor ;  
 Self-sacrifice for truth, — they shunned it *never* ;  
 In short, those men were worthy of the stock  
 They sprung from, — that great-hearted Pilgrim flock,  
 That landed, long ago, on Plymouth Rock."

But can the deeds of those old men be painted ?

No! by his own *deeds* every saint is sainted.  
 Once done, the deed escapes from the control  
 Of pen or paint, and lives within the soul, —

The soul of one who feels a kindred flame,  
 And asks of Time none but a lasting fame ;  
 Of one who, standing where the Pilgrims stood,  
 And knowing that his veins hold Pilgrim blood,  
 Knows he can feel, too, as the Pilgrims felt ;  
 Kneel in the spirit that old Brewster knelt ;  
 For freedom dare somewhat as Standish dared ;  
 Care for the Commonwealth as Carver cared ;  
 Bear with a patient spirit, as they bore,  
 Perils at sea and perils on the shore ;  
 Aspire to serve the Lord as they aspired ;  
 With all the Pilgrims' fiery zeal be fired ;  
 Meet, on a wild and barren shore, the gaunt  
 And hungry wolf, — inexorable Want ;  
 To find the ark of God a resting-place,  
 Look Indians, frost, and famine in the face ;  
 Resign the loved ones nearest to his side ;  
 Give to the grave, as Standish gave, his bride ;  
 And die, as fifty of their hundred died.

Such be *our* souls, and we may well discard  
 The labors of the artist and the bard.  
 It is, indeed, an enviable thing  
 In deathless strains of deathless deeds to sing ;  
 But far more so, according to my creed,  
 To have a soul like his who did the deed.  
 A *painted* hero, — it is well to see one :  
 A *real* hero, — better far to *be* one.

We said, "Resign the loved ones at his side ;  
 Give to the grave, as Standish gave, his bride ;"  
 And we have said, "While Darkness held her throne,  
 The sturdy Standish walked the deck alone."  
 Here let us add, While others found repose,  
 Under his watchful eye, his lovely Rose,  
 Bound to his heart by cords that ne'er decay,  
 Beneath that deck, sleepless and fading lay :  
 One little month, and on that icy shore  
 Death's cold hand touched her, and she bloomed no  
 more.

Late had she bowed over her father's grave ;  
 Still later, with her husband, crossed the wave ;  
 Given herself to him in her beauty's pride ;  
 Bloomed on his bosom, faded there, and died.

Her grave is ready. In the bitter air,  
 All things are frozen but the funeral prayer,  
 While all without is bound in icy chains,  
 Her famished sisters, round her cold remains,  
 With stricken hearts, their only offering,  
 Come, and in sorrow's tones this requiem sing : —

REQUIEM.

Dear sister! thou hast paid the debt that all of us must pay ;  
 The beauty of thy blooming cheek, soon hath it passed away ;  
 Thy sun, that rose so beautiful, is early clouded in ;  
 And thou hast left us in a world of sorrow and of sin.





And the wild beasts that through the forest prowl, —  
 The bear's marauding, and the gaunt wolf's howl ;  
 The stealthy savage, aiming at their life  
 The arrow, tomahawk, or scalping-knife ;  
 Add to all this, what never has been told,  
 The driving snow-storms and the bitter cold  
 Of a New-England winter ! Think how, then,  
 'These Pilgrim women met all this like men !  
 Nay, when their cheeks were wan for want of bread,  
 How these same women made the sick man's bed ;  
 Spoke to him words of hope, when blank despair  
 Was shutting out what little light was there ;  
 Cheered up the sinking spirits of the man,  
 And soothed his pains as none but woman can ;  
 And tell me, shall those Pilgrim women not  
 Be aye remembered ? Can they be forgot ?  
 Were they not helps meet for those Pilgrim men ?  
 Oh, yes ! "When shall we look upon their like  
     again ?"

Their like again ? Whene'er occasion calls !  
 In Labor's cottage, or in Pleasure's halls ;  
 Whether she's dancing in the gay saloon,  
 Or walking with you by the silver moon,  
 Or leading forth the steps of tottering age,  
 Or standing, thoughtful, by the maniac's cage,  
 Watching a sister on her dying bed,  
 Or dressing her for burial when she's dead,  
 Has she not met the occasion ? Has she quailed

At any toil or peril that assailed?  
 When has a daughter of those mothers failed?

Let not Oblivion, then, those women shroud,  
 Or round them draw her curtain or her cloud.  
 'Tis well our Pilgrim Fathers to revere;  
 But let us hold our Pilgrim Mothers dear:  
 For, but for them, which of us had been here?

The vision of those stars, that in the dawn  
 Of Freedom's day arose, is now withdrawn:  
 Those morning stars, those heralds of the day  
 That o'er our land now pours its golden ray,  
 Are seen no more. But what a glory burns,  
 And shall for ever, round their holy urns!  
 How dim the strongest light that ever shone  
 Round men who "wade through slaughter to a throne,"  
 Compared with what shall glorify their graves,  
 So long as Ocean towards them rolls his waves;  
 So long as, looking o'er the stormy bay,  
 Their narrow house is sprinkled with its spray!

"Their narrow house!" What monumental pile  
 Towers o'er their dust, and marks for many a mile  
 Their resting-place? What simple headstone shows  
 The stranger, where their mouldering bones repose?  
 "None," must we say? Is not their place of rest  
 Worth being noted, consecrated, blest?

O'er their neglected graves sea-breezes pass ;  
 We hear them sighing through the tall, dead grass.  
 Say, in that sighing does the thoughtful ear  
 No tone reproachful from those sleepers hear ?

When one has led of Freedom's host the van,\*  
 Or fallen a martyr in the cause of man,  
 The heart hath never willingly forgot  
 The holy day, the consecrated spot,  
 Marked by an act of valor or of faith,  
 Or by a noble deed or noble death.

Thus Joshua, standing on the desert's edge,  
 When he had taken Israel's solemn pledge,  
 That from Jehovah they would never swerve,  
 But that *Him* only they would love and serve,  
 Set up a stone, and said, "Consider, now,  
 This stone hath heard the covenant and vow  
 That ye have made to God ; and it shall bear  
 Witness against you, should it ever hear,  
 Amid these solemn groves, these arches dim,  
 Your vows go up to any God but Him."

By those who sail, as I have done, with joy,  
 Along the shore where once stood ancient Troy,

\* Some forty or fifty of the following lines are taken, with some alterations, from the poem that I delivered at Acton, Mass., on the occasion of consecrating the monument erected there over the remains of those who fell at Concord, in the first battle in the war of American Independence. — J. P.

Two grassy mounds upon the right are seen :  
 Once the Scamander may have flowed between.  
 Those mounds, by Homer seen, still standing there,  
 The names of Ajax and Patroclus bear.  
 Thousands of years o'er those green mounds have  
     rolled ;

A million mornings touched their tops with gold ;  
 A million nights their dewy tears shall shed  
 On those memorials of the honored dead.

On a low, shelving rock, that breaks the waves  
 That roll in from the east when Eurus raves,  
 And gives smooth water, on the windward side,  
 To ships that in the port of Athens ride,  
 There stands a marble structure. Seen from this,  
 The island and the gulf of Salamis  
 Lie just before you. Off, upon your left,  
 The Persian keels the blue Ægean cleft ;  
 And there the Persian's fleet was swept away ;  
 And, in remembrance of that glorious day,  
 There stands, and looks out on the Grecian seas,  
 And there shall stand, thy tomb, Themistocles !

On many a spot of our own native land,  
 Sacred to valor and to freedom, stand  
 The granite obelisk, the marble pile,  
 Hailed by the patriot heart for many a mile,

As upright witnesses, who lift their head  
To tell the world where sleep the patriot dead.

Prophetic whispers steal upon my ear,  
And seem to say, that not another year  
Shall the calm moon and ever-watchful stars  
Drive o'er the Pilgrims' graves their viewless cars,  
And see those graves neglected. They have seen,  
Too many years, the tall, thin grass wave green ;  
And the dew sparkle like a brilliant gem ;  
And hoar-frost lay its white sheet over them ;  
And heard the night-winds and chill Autumn's gale  
O'er them pour forth their melancholy wail ;  
And Winter, with his mantle o'er them spread,  
Howl his long, stormy requiem o'er the dead.

No longer be it thus ! but o'er the grave,  
Where sleep the true, the holy, and the brave,  
Let monumental stones their vigils keep,  
To tell the world the names of those who sleep  
Within their shadow, and to hold in trust  
The sacred treasure of their garnered dust.

And who may ask their children that the spot  
Where they repose be marked, if *they* may not ?  
Who build the strongest bulwarks of the state ?  
Who is the greatest one amongst the great ?

Not he who o'er the field triumphant treads,  
 Or builds up pyramids of human heads, —  
 Your Cæsar, pointing his pretorian swords;  
 Your Tamerlane, heading his Tartar hordes, —  
 But he who dares, in kings' and bigots' spite,  
 Stand, and do bloodless battle for the *right*;  
 By blessing, binds his people to his throne,  
 And chains *their* wills by having chained his own  
 To the high will of Him who curbs the spheres,  
 And makes them mark his own eternal years;  
 And as *his* greatest glory ever springs,  
 Not from the fact that he is King of kings,  
 But that the greatest good from all his plans  
 Results for aye, so does the greatest man's.

See the results, then, of those Pilgrims' cares,  
 Toils, perils, sufferings, sacrifices, prayers,  
 And offerings, laid, where first in fear they trod,  
 Upon the altar of their faith in God.  
 And, that herein we may not judge amiss,  
 Compare the Pilgrims' landing-day with this.  
 Dense forests with their axes cleared away,  
 Their dark recesses opened to the day,  
 And in their' stead is Amalthea's horn  
 Filled and o'errunning with the golden corn.  
 Then, in a single port, a single sail  
 Stood, stiff with ice; now, not a seaward gale

Blows from our harbors, for a thousand miles,  
 But bears our bounty to the distant isles ;  
 Nor one blows landward, but behold it brings  
 The wealth of nations on its burdened wings, —  
 Nations whose sons are bleeding, or have bled,  
 In battle, and now look to us for bread.  
 For, lo ! our harvests and our thousand mills,  
 Our sheep, our cattle, from our thousand hills,  
 Feed now the hosts that Western Europe pours,  
 In clouds and thunder, on the Euxine's shores.

In one square house, twenty by twenty feet,  
 With a thatched roof to shield from snow and sleet, —  
 A roof, that, one cold January day,  
 While Carver, Bradford, sick beneath it lay,  
 Fired by a spark, entirely burnt away, —  
 In that square house — their bedroom, chapel, hall,  
 The which their “ great new *rendezvous* ” they call —  
 The Pilgrim Fathers their first sabbath kept ;  
 There they all worshiped God, there ate, there slept.

Now, from a myriad mansions large and fair,  
 With the first smoke that curls into the air,  
 Rises the incense of domestic prayer,  
 Where'er the hill-sides slope, the rivers run,  
 From the Penobscot to the Oregon ;  
 While Gothic temples, with their marble spires,  
 Reared by the children of those Pilgrim sires,

In splendid cities, see the serious throng,  
 Like a deep river, calmly flow along,  
 And pour into their gates with prayer and choral  
 song.

Where the poor Pilgrim heard the Indian's yell,  
 The school-house stands, and children learn to spell ;  
 Or the steam-whistle tells of coming cars ;  
 Or Science sits, and counts and weighs the stars.  
 Where *then*, adorned with feathers and tattoo,  
 The Indian paddled his birch-bark canoe,  
*Now*, without sails, a gorgeous palace rides,  
 By no winds wafted, turning with no tides,  
 But bearing bravely on its precious freight, —  
 The brave, the wise, the beautiful, the great, —  
 The strongest streams, the broadest oceans o'er,  
 Landing them safe upon the farthest shore.  
 Where in a wigwam *then* the Pilgrim saw  
 A lazy Indian and his laboring squaw,  
 Living 'mid smoke and smut and steam and stench,  
 Without a chair, a bedstead, or a bench,  
 There *now* (in silence passing princely domes)  
 Are seen ten thousand hospitable homes,  
 Where pure domestic love and peace are found,  
 Leaning on Labor's arm, while, all around,  
 Health, strength, and beauty, and true faith, abound ;  
 While, over all, — no vain, no useless thing, —  
 Spreads pure Religion her protecting wing,



And bids the dweller of those happy homes,  
 Whene'er he rests there, or whene'er he roams,  
 Not to forget that from his native stock  
 All this has come, — even from the little flock  
 That stood up, stark and stern, and prayed on Ply-  
 mouth Rock.

But the same spirit, the same moral nerve,  
 That earned this greatness, can alone preserve.

Sons of the Pilgrims! need ye to be told,  
 It takes “perpetual shoulders” to uphold  
 “The exceeding weight of glory” that is theirs,  
 And prove your title as your fathers' heirs?

Will ye, while bending reverent o'er their graves,  
 Become the vassals of slave-hunting knaves?  
 Grow slaves yourselves by making others slaves?  
 Rivet the broken chain, and ply the rod,  
 That gall and cut the children of the God  
 Your Pilgrim Fathers worshiped and obeyed,  
 Because so bid by laws that *men* have made?

Children of the Pilgrim flock,  
 Offshoots of the Pilgrim stock  
 Planted erst on Plymouth Rock,  
 By the surging main;

When upon that shore they dwelt,  
 When upon that rock they knelt,  
 Would those men have *lived*, and felt  
     Slavery's galling chain?

When they all were kneeling there,  
 And the incense of their prayer  
 Rose upon the frosty air, —  
     From a wigwam's shade,  
 Had they heard the savage call,  
 " Hunt ye down that fleeing thrall !  
 Seize and hold him, one and all !"  
     Would they have obeyed ?

*Had* they done it, would they dare  
 Kneel again, and breathe a prayer  
 To the God they worshipped there ?

*Had* they prayed, would He  
 Who their steps had hither led,  
 Who his guardian wing had spread  
 Over their defenceless head,  
     On the wintry sea, —

His all-gracious ear have bowed ?  
 Had they called on Him aloud,  
 Would the column and the cloud,  
     Once to Israel given,

Have descended, as their guide  
 Through those forests dark and wide,  
 When to thee, O God! they cried,  
     And were heard of Heaven?

Hark! that savage call *we* hear!  
*Now* 'tis ringing in our ear!  
 See, the panting thrall is *near*!  
     Shall *we* play the hound?  
 Shall *we* join the unleashed pack,  
 Yelping on a brother's track?  
 Shall *we* seize and drag him back,  
     Fainting, bleeding, bound?

Ay, when we're in love with chains;  
 Ay, when, in our bastard veins,  
 No drop of the blood remains  
     Of those Pilgrim men!  
 Ay, when our own backs we strip,  
 That what blood we have may drip,  
 For the lordlings of the whip;  
     *Then*, and not till then!

O thou Holy One and Just,  
 Thou who wast the Pilgrims' trust,  
 Thou who watchest o'er their dust  
     By the moaning sea, —

By their conflicts, toils, and cares,  
By their perils and their prayers,  
By their ashes, make their heirs  
True to them and thee!









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